

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Alexander Melville Bell, Eliza Symonds Bell, Carrie Bell, January 19, 1873, with transcript

3rd copy Copy of a letter written by Alexander Graham Bell to his parents and Carrie. 35 West Newton Street, January 19th, 1873. Dear Papa, Mama and Carrie:

Miss Hull and Miss Rogers are both here just now and I have been so busy as not to know what to do.

I have spent this forenoon lying in bed reading a book and I hurry to write this note that you may not think I have forgotten that I have a father and mother to whom I can write. This evening I am to take tea with Mr. Alger.

I find I cannot go on much longer as I am doing — so until I can arrange matters, and can afford to employ an assistant teacher — I am going to have Miss Dudley assist me. She has been in the school-room for the last day or two, and I intend to have her teach George for one hour and a half this week while I am in the room to assist her. I think she will do well. After that I think I shall feel confidence in employing myself with other pupils during that hour and a half.

Mrs. Mitchell will not be here till the 1st of February as all her children have been ill with measles. Miss Lippitt will come as soon as the small-pox has somewhat abated. The clerk of the Commonwealth Hotel, (only a few houses from here) has died from small-pox. It is hoped that the energetic measures taken by the newly organized Board of Health will soon bring the enemy under control. I have been re-vaccinated twice within the past few days — but in neither case has the operation been successful.

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I think that everything points to a successful year pecuniarily. The following is my present list of pupils engaged — with the minimum amount I may expect from

minimum maximum 1. George Sanders 262.50 262.50 2. Miss Dudley 3. Miss Redden (2 month's inst. arranged for) 53.32 4. Miss Adams (12 lessons) 50.00 5. Miss Hull 50.00 150.00 6. Miss Rogers 50.00 150.00 7. Miss Lippitt 50.00 8. Lillie Mitchell 500.00 9. Mrs. Mitchell 10. Miss Jones 50.00 Total minimum amount \$1065.82 Max. ?

You will observe that I have placed the minimum amounts too low — so that I am certain of receiving much more than that mentioned above.

Then Mrs. Mitchell wrote to me about her daughter I told her that my terms were \$500 for instructing a teacher — and \$500 per annum for a pupil. She writes that she wishes herself to study the system as thoroughly as though she were going to teach a school. That she would come at this time and remain till summer and that during that time her daughter should be my pupil.

A bill has just passed Congress, and now awaits the President's signature incorporating the "Loomis Telegraph Company." The Company has been formed to carry out the project of a Dr. Loomis — namely to telegraph to Europe without a wire and without a battery !!!

It is believed that certain strata of the atmosphere are charged with electricity and that these strata are, as it were insulated from the earth by the non-electric air beneath them and 3 can only discharge their electricity at the poles in the form of auroral displays. The idea, then seems to be that there is a shell of electrified air at a considerable height all round the world.

Dr. Loomis believes that the highest summits of the Rocky Mountains — the Alps, Himalayas, etc., penetrate this or go near it but from the snow and ice, etc., upon them they do not form good conductors for the electricity to pass into the earth.

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He proposes therefore to erect poles supporting apparatus capable of collecting atmospheric electricity upon the highest summits of the Alps and the Rocky Mountains and by burying plates in the earth at either end make a complete circuit as in the ordinary telegraph. He then asserts that we could use this electrified stratum of air instead of an electrified wire. The project is a bold one and looks like an impossibility. But the inventor has been able to form a company to take up his idea and Congress has given its sanction to the experiment.

With much love, Aleck.